the ultimate READER OF LOVE

FOR THE BOOK

An Anthology of Writers Deeply Concerned
about Massive Book Disposals occurring
at the National Library of New Zealand
Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa
(the wellsprings of knowledge)

2021

Front Cover
Puppets: Unknown

Rear Cover
Bibliothèque by Sandra Bianciardi
130 x 130cm, 2008

Page 44
Edward Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*,
Lyon & Blair, Lambton Quay, Wellington, 1891.

Page 51
The World Lost, Mary-Anne Bourke, 2021

THE BOOKLET HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE
WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF PHANTOM BILLSTICKERS.
WE EXPRESS OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO JIM WILSON
FOR A LIFETIME OF DEDICATION
TO NEW ZEALAND ARTS, WRITING AND MUSIC.

THE ULTIMATE READER OF LOVE
FOR THE BOOK
ISSN: 1953-1427
Percutio special edition 2021

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Edited by William Direen
Legal Deposit : July, 2021

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Countries which attempt any widespread suppression
cut themselves off from what is most alive in the thought
of their time, and may be in danger.
No society can flourish when it is stifled intellectually.
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Book Disposals at the National Library

Mass Book Disposals are being carried out by the National Library of New Zealand/*Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa* (the wellsprings of knowledge).

If allowed to continue, a fine research library will be gutted. This will deprive New Zealanders of a research portal to their roots. Scholars will have no access to published studies about the rest of the world. Future decision-makers will be denied studies about international reforms, social progress, historical understandings, the heritage of literature, philosophy, linguistics, communications researches and political diagnosis.

640,000 books have been earmarked for disposal. It defies comprehension. It isn't as though our country has no space for these books—there are buildings where they might be stored, and which might be called on; other research libraries do this all the time.

The writers in this anthology feel strongly that these disposals must immediately cease. Since the minister in charge is now the only person who can lawfully and openly stop them, please voice your concern by writing to her. A form should appear if you click on the following link.

Jan.Tinetti@parliament.govt.nz

You might want to say :

Dear Minister, Please use your right of veto to prevent any further book disposals at our National Library.

◆

Anne Kennedy

Reading the money

When the books are gone we will read the money.
We'll watch the spangled tickertape flutter towards oblivion
and shop for bargains at the sale table of thought.

When the books are gone we'll research at the pulp and paper mill.
We'll look up jokes on Huey Decimal in the frowsty light.

At parties we'll swing a bat at the pinada of knowledge
and watch everyone swarming over the long grass.

Reading the old storage room will be an emptiness.

In summer we'll swim in a river flowing yellow then pink
with the dye of books and the dissolution of experience.
In the distance, the murmur of bureaucrats.

In the streets, the glazed masks of shredded learning.

We will forage at the carboot of democracy.

When the books are gone we will read the money.

Harry Ricketts

We're Just Rehoming Some Books

"We're just 'rehoming' some books
—600,000 or so.
"We're not vandals or crooks;
we're just 'rehoming' some books.
It's not the shambles, it looks;
it's a really 'cool project', you know.
We're just 'rehoming' some books"
—600,000 or so.

Dolores Janiewski

An Induced Amnesia

Ray Bradbury once asked: "Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future." According to Bradbury, the removal of books is a way of inducing amnesia. It carries out euthanasia on history itself. New Zealand cannot build an identity by discarding the many volumes that discuss our ancestral pasts or our diverse heritages and cultures. How will we navigate into the future?

Tossing out books New Zealanders have read in libraries across this country since 1939 erases vital parts of our memories and intellectual heritage. The National Library's current policy assumes we already know what we need to know, but recent experience suggests otherwise. Did we know anti-Islamic hatred would result in a murderous attack in Christchurch in March 2019? Isn't it possible we can learn about the source of that evil by reading a 1922 book about the Ku Klux Klan that may soon be discarded?

When we are cut off from international travel, reading can substitute for direct experience. There are 15,000 books about travel and 80,000 historical texts in the National Library. And as for building bridges, there are 60,000 works of literature there, to teach us empathy with people in distant places.

The National Library is behaving as if New Zealanders do not need to read George Orwell, Mahatma Gandhi or books about Islam or Scotland. Aristotle is on the 'unwanted' list along with books about apartheid, environmentalism, civil liberties, Omar Khayyam, rugby, cricket, and the Impressionists. Books in more than 50 languages might be thrown away.

It's also, and mostly, about the cost of storage and the Department of Internal Affairs not wanting to pay for it. Their warehouse in Whanganui is no longer fit for purpose but instead of getting another warehouse, it has decided to get rid of the books. And then there is the notion that NZ stories are only told in NZ publications—a form of inward looking nationalism or insularity, a political decision about NZ identity which the Minister (Department of Internal Affairs) refuses to refute. Ironically, the Department also does passports.

And yet these threatened books constitute tangible evidence of our intellectual formation and of our evolving 'sense of place' in the modern world. They must remain in their national home, the National Library of New Zealand, Te Puna Mātauranga, in Wellington.

Fiona Kidman

Like Everyone Who Likes to Read Books

I wanted to work in a bookshop to be close
to the heart of the matter, all those outward
spines hiding romance and blood-curdling
terror and chilling moments I wanted
to stay at home and be on the road all
at once between the covers leaf
after falling leaf of words I wanted to know
what they told me the minute
the author had written them down
their newness a prize but how could I release
them into the hands of others, that's what librarians
do and for the time that is what I did
instead, standing at the library counter
giving the books over taking them back
until I found my own words and wrote them down.

Cilla McQueen

To the 640,000, Awaiting Disposal

By no means spineless, but disabled by
outdated language, fact, philosophy,
untouched for years, it seems you must succumb
to culling.
Books! Like to the dragon's teeth
that Cadmus sowed, rise up in mutinous tracts!
Battle for wisdom's jewel, stir trouble!

Crossing the Bar:
Remembering the Thwaites

Ann and Anthony, Anthony and Ann
at Low Tharston, Norfolk punting on the mill stream
through reeds and the purple damselflies
of an English summer,
playing table tennis among the trees
or in winter under oaken beams
before a fire in the Mill House
being bookish together –

he the editor-poet famous for Larkin
(and sometime shaman of the Anglican communion)
she the biographer, archivist of secrets
and family matters
who bounced on their trampoline in the woods
telling me she couldn't write her life story
while Anthony lived –

and hadn't she been
my fantasy bossy little Pom
at the Mt Eden Pool of my childhood swims? –

And then at the last Anthony, dying at 90
being read to by Ann
and watched by her –
he silent and seeming unconscious
while she was heard to say
he might be 'crossing the horizon'
eliciting from the death-bed
in that voice still Anthony's – 'the BAR'.

Even at the door
one foot in another world
you must get your quotations right –
that was our Anthony
on his way.

Lisa Samuels

The archive bird

A little story hopped
up and announced its
fight path trajectory
hop hop prestidigitation
the book's in flux ready
to land oh wait
someone's torn thru
a hole in history
derelict unquiet
tying small parcels of
silence around the heads
of nearly uncountable
bobbing books they're
swelled in piles ready
to be burnt white heat
with a regal cut you know
some all noble walking
toward destruction with
their pagey wings
they're like waiting to see
(their words are mouths
and ears and careful
watching) who might
turn on the wind
machine so they can fly
somewhere taut
readable trees grow
abundant what it means
for culture to remake
itself continually means we
don't know what we need
until we see it and
what we have is not always
what we need and what
we need is not always there
and needs to be
a bunch of needs etched on

Lisa Samuels

the archive flag
flut flut among the books
with delicate wings
they keep the little story
warm sharp shiny pugilistic
moral company

David Herkt

An Ark

An ark to save libraries from the deluge,
a rescue mission with fire-extinguishers
for the Serbian militia is firing incendiaries
into the library at Sarajevo
and the Qin Emperor
has ordered the bonfires of writings
on bamboo and silk.
Now is the time for all good people
to come to aid of the printed book.
Crusaders are torching the manuscripts
of gold Byzantium
& the Wehrmacht burns Warsaw's libraries
where flames still smoulder.
Canada destroys its 150-year-old library
of Fisheries & Oceans
to save $500,000
& the New Zealand National Library culls
600,000 books published overseas
as if New Zealanders did not wish to know the world.
How many words does it take to make
a human being?
Many
The books that are unvalued this year
are next year's treasures.
When libraries are destroyed
humanity loses its soul.

Thomas Hocken

On the Journal of Abel Tasman

Tasman was born in 1602 or 1603 at Hoorn, in the north of Holland, a town on the borders of the Zuyder Zee, where so many bold sailors were bred, and where, it has been stated, descendants of his family still remain. But, indeed, we know little of Tasman's personal history beyond that contained in his journal. In this he has truly bequeathed us his monument, though underneath it lies little more than a shadow. An old engraving of him is to be seen in the Christchurch Museum, and it would seem that some personal description is given by M. Dozy in "Bijdragen de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie" ("Contributions to the Language, Country, and People of Dutch-India"), 5th series, vol. II, p. 308.

In a paper read before this institute last year I gave some account of Tasman's Journal and showed that it had never been edited and published in its entirety until so recently as the year 1860, when Herr Jacob Swart, of Amsterdam, gave it to the world in the original old Dutch, which not only differs greatly from modern Dutch but is apparently a dialect.

In his edition, Jacob Swart prefixes to the journal publications of all the documents relating to it. These are of considerable value and interest, and were discovered in the old foliants and letter books of the company, presumably at the same time that the long lost journal was found and forwarded from Batavia to Amsterdam.

Tasman begins and ends his day at midnight, the same as our civil day. He reckons his course and the distance run from noon to noon, at which time he took the latitude and longitude. His watches were : The day, or morning, watch, from 4 to 8; the forenoon, or noon, watch, from 8 to 12 noon; the afternoon watch, from 12 to 4; the flat-foot or, as, we call them, the dog-watche B, from 4 to 6 and 6 to 8; the first watch, 8 to 12 midnight; and the second, or houad watch, 12 midnight to 4 in the morning. It is curious that of all Teutonic-speaking sailors the English alone use the term dogwatch as signifying the hours between 4 and 8 p.m. Other Teutons use the equivalent hund-hunde, or hondewacht, as signifying the second watch—that between midnight and 4a.m.; and to express their dogwatches, between 4 and 8 p.m., they use platt-fuss, platt-foden, or plat-voet, meaning flat-foot. The neo-Latin, or Italic-speaking, sailors had no such words as dog watch, or flat-foot, but spoke of the second watch, or of the watch from 4 to 6 or 6 to 8 in the

evening. I do not know the underlying meaning of these words, but can fancy they contain the idea of the most restful part of a ship's day when a dog would be sufficient guard, and when any work on deck could be done without running : all heel and toe, as the pedestrians have it—a flat foot.

His journal is written in a plain, quaint, intelligible style, and abundantly shows that the writer was a bold and accomplished seaman as well as a fortunate discoverer.

Mark Pirie

My Father's Library

I opened the door
To a myriad of books
Where my father had found pleasure
In the past

I broke the palisade
Around his library of books
To discover the treasure
From his past

I hesitated, then strayed
Inside his library of books
Where reading was leisure
In the past

I sought my father's pride
Inside a myriad of books
To make a measure
Of his past

And through his library of books
I sense what the past can bring
And what the content of books
Mean; as I read them, they sing

David Karena-Holmes

Les Élu/es
(pour ma fille, Sonata)

Choisir d'aller sur une route
implique de ne pas aller sur une autre route.
Combien y a-t-il d'autres routes ?

Choisir de faire une chose
implique de ne pas en faire une autre chose.
Combien y a-t-il d'autres choses ?

Choisir d'être à un endroit
implique de ne pas être à un autre endroit.
Combien y a-t-il d'autres endroits ?

Choisir d'utiliser un mot
implique de ne pas utiliser un autre mot.
Combien sont les autres mots ?

Toujours, les autres sont nombreux.
Rares sont les élus.

●

Lyall Benjamin

If They Were Chairs or Pots

If they were an early collection of chairs and pots or
fashion or God forbid rugby memorabilia;
questions would be asked, voices raised,
hackles elevated.

    But books?
    Let's throw out the shit or burn it like nazis.

And years later.
Sheepish grins covered asses and OOPS.

David Karena-Holmes

The Chosen
(for my daughter, Sonata)

Choosing to go one way
involves not going some other way.
How many are the other ways?

Choosing to do one thing
involves not doing some other thing.
How many are the other things?

Choosing to be in one place
involves not being in some other place.
How many are the other places?

Choosing to use one word
involves not using some other word.
How many are the other words?

Alway the others are many.
Few are the chosen.

•

Michael Morrissey

THE SLOW DEATH OF THE BOOK

Alexandria casts a long shadow
The long sword of flame and fire
Which burnt at Hitler's pyre
Turned tomes to ashes
Knowledge roiled as smoke
I have never burnt a book
Only given them away to friends.

Christine Dann

Telling New Zealand's stories

"While it may be fair to complain about the absence of the Musket Wars from the draft curriculum, for instance, the wars in America and Canada, the Highland Clearances and the Napoleonic Wars are equally absent, with all their brutality and their direct links with musket fighting and the New Zealand Wars", wrote Distinguished Professor Dame Anne Salmond in the third of her series of articles on Aotearoa New Zealand histories for Newsroom in June 2021.

She was commenting on the proposed New Zealand history curriculum for schools, which – as she and others well qualified to comment are pointing out – leaves out so much. She goes on to say "The failure to discuss Pasifika and Asian histories in Aotearoa is equally incomprehensible, let alone the histories of women." As someone who wrote the first draft of the history of 'second wave' feminism in New Zealand (published in 1985 as Up from Under Women and Liberation in New Zealand 1970-1985), I agree with Salmond on this point and on the other lamentable omissions.

I also *tautoko* her view that "Just as fine cloaks are woven, and meeting-houses are carved and decorated by *tohunga*, so experts from the different *wānanga*, whether Māori, Pasifika, European or from other ancestral legacies, all with their own rigorous standards, should be crafting our nation's stories, cross-checking each other for accuracy and balance."

Further, I am painfully aware that at the very point in time in which a New Zealand history curriculum is being developed, the 'tools' that historians need to craft our nation's many stories are being thrown into the dustbin of history! I refer to the hundreds of thousands of books (maybe as many as one million) which are currently being removed or marked for removal from the research and lending collections of the National Library of New Zealand, and from university libraries around the country. Book Guardians Aotearoa (BGA) was formed in 2020 to bring together the many strands of opposition to the National Library's disposal of New Zealand's culture and heritage i.e. its book collections.

What this disposal will mean is not just another unwarranted destruction of a public asset without public consultation or approval (bad enough in itself) but worse – the erasure of the possibilities and likelihood of accurate histories ever being written about anything which relates to New Zealand, in the absence of books which tell our stories from their beginnings, and as they have changed over time and space.

Without strands of flax or wool, cloaks cannot be woven; without books from times past which contain the stories and the analysis of those times, histories cannot be written. The wholesale and wanton disposal of the national *taonga* of books on all subjects published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which do not meet

the Department of Internal Affairs ludicrously narrow definition of 'relating to New Zealand' is an act of cultural suicide, which will lead to an intellectually impoverished population.

In a series of articles for BGA entitled 'The Great Digital Derangement' I am working on documenting the compelling reasons why "libraries going digital" is not and will never be an alternative to collecting and protecting books and making books freely accessible to the public – all the public. Two of the greatest twentieth century writers were formed by the library books they read. Katherine Mansfield had privileged access to General Assembly Library books for free; Janet Frame, the daughter of a Railways worker, had to win a subscription to a library to be able to read its books.

On behalf of all the girls from poor backgrounds who might be New Zealand's next great twenty-first century writer I appeal to the powers that be, who do not seem to understand this, to open their minds and their hearts, and build on the existing national collection of books so that the National Library can live up to its name in Māori – *Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa*, the wellsprings of knowledge.

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tautoko: support, help *tohunga:* expert in tribal customs
wānanga: study session, seminar (*Whare Wānanga* - Study House, University), but also "something like 'cultural tradition'" *taonga:* valuable, treasure, &c .

(Thanks DKH for glossary)

Alan Brunton

Of Poetry

A long rain goes for a walk
on a still white page
precious water on this hot street,
distraction leads us on to on a day like this
in silence of the Quiet of Silences.

If I get us out of here,
will you marry me with all your strange arias?

Carolyn McCurdie

Our Stories Held in Trust

This is our library: an elaborate loom, weaves
the fluff and tangle, silken shimmer of minds
in the shared gift of words. The stuff of us.

Land is the frame. Our skeins and loops, umbilical cords:
Polynesia, Ayr, Guangdong, Madras, the whole atlas
threaded, so that new startles old, and see, colours shift,
become forest-darkened, sun-lit by tussock;
deep folds billowed and tasselled by weather.

A people made and re-made,
re-journey there, learn our home for returning is here.
Is there a nation on earth where to-and-from
is more warp-and-weft of the story?

We're sea-smart, moon-washed and shaped by the tides.
So we know tidal lore, that an ebb tide rips the beach bare.
A surge of the new clears out the old, scours more
than was planned. Pull, pull of the undertow.

And too much is lost. Our children left stranded.
They'll ask: where and why did those memories go?
Why didn't you tell us: we never were islands.

Brian Turner

SKY

If the sky knew half
of what we're doing
down here

it would be stricken,
inconsolable,
and we would have

nothing but rain

the imaginary earthquake hits wellington library

computers pop like butter in the microwave
CDs are flying, Bowie's last death
-inspired album is a throwing star

stairs fall and pile up ancient ruins
the escalator hangs in a zigzag from the top floor
impossible escher in chaos

the handsome customer service representative
who glared at you for standing
too close to ignore
too far from the desk to greet
is run down by a trolley stacked high with
agatha christie whodunits in large print

an avalanche in the graphic novel section
moshpits made of encyclopedieas
the carpet barely holds the crack in the concrete
floor a ledge to a drop and the gap between them
goes straight to hell or someone's version

the glass in the giant windows turns in the air
some shards as big as a man descending
crescendo
follows the rumble you heard first
rushing closer
as you stand

three metres back from the returns counter
in the safe space far from everything
still as a watching bird
while possibility rains down all round you.

Tony Beyer

Peter Hooper

trust a man from the West Coast
to write the best rain poems
schooled in the level prosody
of window pane and furrowed roof
so words like yard and paddock
come towards us saturated

wisdom a wiser head instinctively
questions might envisage
walls and fences melting into desuetude
under our habitual dispensation
where everyone knows everyone
or thinks they should

to pass by one's brother's name
on the local war memorial
must have stirred havocs in self esteem
only a recompense of tears
centred on impartial nature
could partially assuage

maker of belated tributes
he deserves one too
being read by younger minds
the physical book in the hand
a speaking death had seemed to silence
heard as if alive again

—Peter Hooper (1919–1991) West Coast poet, novelist, teacher, bookseller and conservationist. *Rejoice Instead: The Collected Poems of Peter Hooper*, edited with an introduction by Pat White. ISBN: 978-0-473-57185-6. Softcover, 224 pp, 210 x 148mm. Cold Hub Press. Colin McCahon, who used his poems in a number of art works, described him as a 'poet of grace and truth'.

Siobhan Harvey

A Book Removed from the National Library is a Ghost

They don't belong here, except in words. The ghost
is housed in their stories, lines of narrative

poetry and memoirs resurrecting the displaced
lives they've otherwise erased. All this is invisible:

the daily retreat into the study; the sanctuary
found in characters who don't exist,

except in words; the spirit bolstered
by every rejection-letter. The deep scars

no one sees; the blood oozing from
open wounds no one notices: these

the ghost shapes into inspiration, then writes.
Through the witching-hours and spells of

self-doubt, they endure ... materialising
a book, frail as fuse-wise, brilliant as

its illumination. Belonging is found in
a library where it awaits moments of request.

For to demand a book is to assimilate the word,
pages, ideas, theories, mind, author, study, home

and whakapapa of everything which enabled it to be.
Then, to remove it? Here's an emptiness which haunts

the library always, a trace absence – a filament
broken – of a book, and its ghost exiled from

matter - words, pages, ideas, theories, mind, study,
home, whakapapa and everything - unknown to us now.

Simon Sweetman

NO WEEDING

In Wellington they're weeding books – what a term. Words
are not beasts. There's no need to cull. Nurture and grow and
build instead – create space for them and that creates need.

If you're gonna talk gardens how about watering with thought
all of the people craving knowledge; leave books in the places
where they should be – build more sheds to house them and

watch them take root. What's the worst that could happen?
You could create some new jobs. What's the worst that could
happen? A few more researchers are able to keep up. What's

the worst that could happen? Books galore and more and more
and suddenly we're interested in something beyond profit-margins;
that alone is reason to invest. Albeit ironically. We need a way

to move past profit and loss. We need a home for the things that
matter – and not more measurements for if and when and how
they matter in any financial sense. In second-hand bookstores

every customer is grateful. They almost completely cannot
believe their luck. They are finding something they believed
lost to time. They are finding something they believed no longer

existed. That's something special. I've been there to see their
faces. I've had my face do the dance of joy upon discovery. Just
last week I found a book I was sure was long gone and forever

buried. I rushed right home and read it twice. That special way
with a book is something we need to teach forever. We need
people to know what it's like to hold words. To have that power

in their hands as it transfers through body to mind and soul.
That's a process that needs no weeding, no pruning, there's
always something magical in a book. Just take a look!

A Fairy Tale?

There once was a country far from anyone.
It was the furthest away country in the world.
Its poet-regents built up a people's library,
the finest in the world, whose books
helped them figure out ways to improve the island,
and even to improve the rest of the world.

But the island came to be ruled
by tightrope-walkers and acrobats,
and the poet-rulers were lost in history.
The people lost a generation
to lethal overseas circuses not their own,
and began to think of themselves, mainly.

One day the new rulers decided the time was right.
They would empty the people's massive library!
It would save them money, and how their voices would echo!
How impressive all that space would be!

And so they sent the books to nearby towns
and to damp warehouses in further away towns.
They said they were going to be kind to the books:
like unwanted pets, or homeless people,
they would find new homes for them!
Little by little the books disappeared.

The citizens who had read about what happens
when you dispose of good books,
tried to warn of the danger;
but the new rulers emptied the library.

They set up hoops to jump through.
This kind of person should jump through this hoop,
and that kind of person must jump through that hoop.
At the end you would get a certificate
and a promotion, and perhaps enter parliament.

Bill Direen

So the readers salvaged what they could.
They memorised some stories and poems,
just as in *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury;
they helped each other with their researches;
and they lent salvaged volumes among themselves.
Then they published a book expressing all their feelings
and thoughts about books and libraries.

History gave another turn,
and the contortionists who destroyed the books
broke their own necks jumping through the hoops.
The readers' time had come.
They formed a new government
and built a second library as wonderful as the first.

Richard von Sturmer

The Steering Wheel
I had been heading
in the wrong direction
for a long time,
into darkness and uncertainty.
Then, a few hours ago,
reading in my armchair,
the book I held in my hands
became a steering wheel
and I was back on the right road.
One sentence was all it took
for my hands to turn the wheel:
'Every moment that makes up our life
is a mere process of *experiencing*.'
And the light coming through the window
the stillness of the curtains
the hum of the refrigerator–
all were signposts pointing
to the mystery of this world.

Richard Reeve

Free Pile

DKH tells me over the telephone he picked up a book by Bill Pearson,
Rifled Sanctuaries, about literary representation of the Pacific Islands,

from the free pile outside the local library. I expressed my concern,
which is to say nothing about the author of 'Fretful Sleepers' (or DKH).

Any reader will know what I'm talking about, and obviously that's DKH,
Whose subsequent words, I recall, might have been those of a vegan

lamenting accidental or induced consumption of a real pork chop.
David rose to the occasion. Resolved to report what could surely only be

a prosaic mistake, the late Bill Pearson being found sleeping rough
between copies of 70s romance novels, his pages catching the dew

present even in the summeriest of South Island towns at evening.
Implicitly neglected, whatever the windfall to our acquisitive poet.

And now I read of the National Library's own free pile even as Scribes
comes down. Will the real secondhand bookshops please stand up?

Alfred Domett (1811-1887)

Books, the mighty mines
Where all the extinguished forests of mankind
In diamond-thoughts lie crystallised—enshrined.

From *Ranolph and Amohia,* Canto XXIII

Peter Simpson

Invaluable Places:
The role of libraries in the life and work of Colin McCahon

Researching the life and work of New Zealand's greatest twentieth century painter, Colin McCahon (1919-87), for a recent two-volume study of the artist,[1] I was continually struck by the multiple importance that libraries had in his career. This importance is of three distinct kinds:

As a source of knowledge and learning, especially about art history
As a venue for the exhibition of his art
As a repository for paintings and archives (including letters) relating to his work.

1.

McCahon's enthusiasm for libraries began early in life. In the 1930s his family (parents and two siblings) set aside an evening each week for visiting Dunedin Public Library to browse and borrow books. Archie Dunningham (1907-1996), the librarian from 1933, had built one of the best collections in the country; it was particularly strong in art books, thanks partly to grants from the Carnegie Foundation. McCahon remembered these visits all his life. Asked in 1976 about influences on his work in a radio interview with Ray Thorburn, he replied:

You start from the tradition that you find by using the library extensively. This is one of the things in Dunedin while we were there. Dunedin Public Library had the first collection of art books. It was all very useful. No other library seemed to have it at the time.[1]

In particular McCahon valued the Phaidon books which raised the standard of art publishing in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly the large format books devoted to single artists with high quality plates that began appearing in 1936. Titles which especially mattered to him were those on Van Gogh (1936), Titian (1936), Cézanne (1937), Michelangelo (1940) and Bellini (1945).

[1] Peter Simpson, Colin McCahon: There is Only One Direction, Vol. 1, 1919-1960 (Auckland University Press, 2019); Peter Simpson, Colin McCahon: Is This the Promised Land? Vol. 2, 1960-1987 (AUP, 2020).
[2] Radio interview with Ray Thorburn, 1976 (E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tamaki).

Another book first discovered on the shelves of the Dunedin library but originating closer to home was Charles Cotton's *Geomorphology*.[2] Ron O'Reilly (1914-82), a librarian friend, asked McCahon where and how he had first encountered Cotton; he replied:

You will remember Pat Hayman.[3]...I talked to him about Cotton whose Geomorphology I'd met up with in the Dunedin Public Library – that invaluable place – Cotton, Cezanne, Bellini, Gauguin. Pat got us 'Geomorphology' as a wedding present. A most unusual gift & I've used it solidly for landscape information...[4]

He further explained:

I loved his drawings for the way they told about things. I have since then constantly referred to Cotton to explain what it is I have actually seen... Nobody told me about Cotton I just found him on a book shelf.[5]

It was the spare, explanatory drawings of Cotton which enabled the giant step forward McCahon made in *Harbour Cone from Peggy's Hill* (1939), with its radically simplified landforms largely stripped of surface detail (roads, houses) to expose the geomorphological structure of the land.

2.

McCahon's first solo exhibition took place at the French Maid Coffee House in Wellington in 1945; his next two solo shows were both held at public libraries in 1948: at Wellington Public Library in February (later shown at the Lower Hutt Library) and at Dunedin Public Library in September.

McCahon first heard about the possibility of exhibiting at Wellington Public Library in 1946 from his friend Ron O'Reilly who was then attending Library School before beginning his distinguished career. He told McCahon:

Colin: the Wgtn Public Library is now making available the walls of the passage outside the reference room (at the head of the stairs) for one man exhibitions, free...

[3] Charles Cotton, *Geomorphology*, first published in 1922; the third edition (Whitcombe & Tombs, 1942), was the one which McCahon owned.
[4] Patrick Hayman (1915-88) was an English painter who lived in New Zealand 1936-1947 and became a close friend of Colin McCahon and his circle.
[5] CM to Ron O'Reilly, 31 August 1972; McCahon's letters quoted with the kind permission of the McCahon family and Matthew O'Reilly.
[6] Ibid.

The wall space is ample for a pretty good display including big pictures. What about availing yourself of it?[6]

McCahon wrote to the librarian, Stuart Perry (1908-1982), whose initiative this was, and eventually secured an exhibition for February 1948. O'Reilly, who was by then working at Lower Hutt Public Library, was heavily involved in organising the exhibition (assembling, cataloguing, hanging) because McCahon was living not in Wellington but in Tahunanui near Nelson. The exhibition was dominated by works from 1947-48 (29 of 42), a prolific period which encompassed McCahon's first figurative biblical paintings such as *The Angel of the Annunciation*, *The King of the Jews* and several *Crucifixions*. The show was sharply controversial and caused a flurry of (mostly hostile) correspondence in newspapers and magazines. It made McCahon's name as a painter.

Later that year (in September 1948) McCahon held an exhibition at the Dunedin Public Library, organised by Archie Dunningham assisted by McCahon's Dunedin friends, Rodney Kennedy and Charles Brasch.[7] O'Reilly wrote to McCahon in June: 'Charles [Brasch] mentioned that he is trying to persuade you to have an exhibition in Archie [Dunningham's] new lecture hall. I hope you will accede'.[8] McCahon reported to O'Reilly:

The Dunedin exhibition started on Thursday...On Wed[nesday] hung the pictures & made up the catalogue. Thursday more hanging – that is a very difficult room to hang in... The final effect was pretty good though not so good as Wellington.[9]

Later he was less enthusiastic, telling O'Reilly: 'The show was really a flop. Very few people went & it all seemed very flat. The opening was the only busy time'.[10]

There were 27 items included (mostly paintings, some drawings), made between July 1947 and September 1948. In a hand-written note on a copy of the simple catalogue (with a brief essay by Brasch) McCahon informed

[7] Ron O'Reilly to Colin McCahon 30 March 1946; quotations from O'Reilly's letters with the kind permission of the O'Reilly estate and Hocken Collections.
[8] Rodney Kennedy (1909-89), artist, critic, theatre director; Charles Brasch (1909-73), poet, patron, collector, editor of *Landfall* 1947-66.
[9] Ron O'Reilly to Colin McCahon, 27 June, 1948.
[10] CM to Ron O'Reilly, 20 September 1948.
[11] CM to Ron O'Reilly, [25 October], 1948.

O'Reilly: 'Quite a lot of new work and even some of the old ones have been repainted.'[11] Into this latter category came *The Promised Land*, *The Family*, *Dear Wee June*, *Ligar Bay* and *Triple Takaka* (previously *Monday Morning near Takaka*); these had all been shown in February and were later repainted in Christchurch where McCahon had moved in March 1948. Among new paintings from Christchurch were *Hail Mary* and *Takaka: night and day*. Nothing sold; apparently Dunedin people thought the prices were too high – they ranged for paintings from 8 to 50 guineas (for *Takaka: night and day*).

A decade later, in April 1958, McCahon again showed at Dunedin Public Library, once more with assistance from Dunningham, Brasch and Kennedy. In the intervening years he had exhibited his work largely at Group Shows in Christchurch and in solo or two-person shows (with Toss Woollaston) at private galleries in Wellington (1949) and Auckland (1949, 1957). In 1953 McCahon moved with his family to Titirangi in West Auckland to become a curator at Auckland City Art Gallery. The 39 paintings shown were largely landscapes of kauri forest at Titirangi, French Bay and Manukau Harbour painted between 1954 and 1957, partly under the influence of Cubism, which he had studied in Melbourne in 1951. At the opening Brasch said:

The Auckland paintings seem an entirely new departure. The colour and light of Auckland are different from those of the rest of N. Z...All of them tell us something new about the look of N.Z. They couldn't have been painted anywhere in the world except Auckland; but they could only have been painted by someone who had absorbed what painters in other countries are doing today.[12]

By the time the 1958 Dunedin exhibition opened McCahon was in the United States on a four-month visit sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation and Auckland City Art Gallery. He criss-crossed the continent from west coast to east coast visiting scores of public galleries, museums and dealer galleries. Back in New Zealand his work changed radically – in scale (much larger), materials (inks and commercial enamels, not oil paints), supports (hardboard and unstretched canvas), and in other respects, such as more gestural paint application, frequent use of words, increasing abstraction and working in series. One of the first works completed on his return was the 16-panel *The Wake*, on large unstretched canvases and incorporating a

[12] CM to Ron O'Reilly, [September] 1948.

[13] Charles Brasch, talk at opening of Recent Paintings, Dunedin Public Library Exhibition Hall, April 1958, Hocken Library MS-996 Brasch 2/226.

nine-part poem by John Caselberg about the death of his dog, Thor.

The Wake was first shown at Canterbury Public Library, where O'Reilly had been librarian since 1951. McCahon first mentioned the panels to O'Reilly in November 1958, predicting that they would 'cause much of the same stir that the 194[8] exhibition did in Wellington'.[13] He wrote again in March 1959:

*The "*Wake*" panels of John [Caselberg's] & mine are now available at any time you want them. It seems they will fit into the room – only just & unfortunately with gaps. This is really one large painting so the order of the panels is important and also the continuity... for John's sake as well as mine I want the maximum effect. They are an attempt to create a new environment and a quite new visual experience.*[14]

This was the only exhibition of McCahon's works at Canterbury Public Library, though O'Reilly also purchased several for the loan collection he started in 1955. These included *Kauri landscape* (1955), *Red and black landscape* (1959) and several *Northland* drawings (1959).

The indefatigable O'Reilly was instrumental in organizing several later exhibitions of McCahon's work: at the Canterbury Society of Arts Gallery in 1962 (the *Gate* series) and 1963 (the Woollaston/McCahon *Retrospective*). Years later, O'Reilly organised *McCahon's "Necessary Protection"* (1977) at Govett-Brewster Gallery in New Plymouth, where he became director after retiring from his position as head of the Library School in Wellington.

3.

As McCahon's career advanced and interest in his work among artists, critics, scholars, collectors and art aficionados expanded, libraries became increasingly important as repositories for materials such as inward and outward correspondence, documentation associated with exhibitions and in some cases, notably at Hocken Collections, for art works.

Several of McCahon's Dunedin friends, notably Kennedy and Brasch, began gifting paintings and other materials to the Hocken from the mid-1950s. In 1955 Kennedy donated more than 20 landscape drawings preliminary

[14] McCahon to O'Reilly 11 November 1958

[15] McCahon to O'Reilly, 11 March 1959. *The Wake* was partly influenced by 'environments' created by Alan Kaprow McCahon had seen in New York.

to McCahon's panoramic depictions of *Otago Peninsula* in the 1940s.[15] In 1977 Kennedy also donated numerous drawings McCahon had given him associated with theatre productions McCahon had designed sets for such as *Peer Gynt* (1953) and *The Glass Menagerie* (1956). Brasch first donated paintings in 1963 (e.g. *I Am*, *Maitai Valley*, *The Virgin and Child Compared*), followed by another group in 1969 (including *Manukau 3* and *Titirangi Winter*); further works and papers were included in a major bequest after Brasch's death in 1973, such as *Kauri Trees* and *Fifteen Drawings for Charles Brasch*.

In that same year 1973, after the death of McCahon's mother, some 25 works his parents owned, especially from early in his career, were given to the Hocken as the John & Ethel McCahon Bequest (including *Harbour Cone from Peggy's Hill*).

McCahon himself began donating important works to Hocken in the 1970s, including *The Song of the Shining Cuckoo* in 1977, *The Wake*, *Dear Wee June* and *Northland triptych* in 1978, and *John in Canterbury* in 1980. In 1981 the McCahon family deposited a large collection of inwards correspondence and other archival materials in the Hocken; this was followed by another large gift of papers after McCahon's death in 1987. The Library was also the recipient of papers by other writers and artists such as Caselberg, Brasch and Patricia France which included important McCahon materials, including letters. This accumulation of McCahon materials led eventually to the inclusion of the Colin and Anne McCahon Papers at Hocken Collections in the UNESCO Memory of the World Aotearoa New Zealand Register in 2020.

Many other libraries in New Zealand have acquired valuable McCahon papers and archives; these include Alexander Turnbull Library (e.g. the McCahon-Peter McLeavey correspondence), Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand (McCahon's letters to Toss Woollaston), and the E.H. McCormick Research Library at Auckland Art Gallery which has an extensive McCahon archive including letters, photographs, and files of ephemera and exhibition reviews.

The first recourse of anyone wishing to research some aspect of McCahon's life and career is to the archival resources of New Zealand's libraries, those invaluable places.

[16] *Otago Peninsula* (1946, Te Papa Tongarewa); *Otago Peninsula* (1946-49); the latter work, painted for Kennedy, was given by him to Dunedin Public Library.

Olivia Macassey

Footnote concerning a vanished book

> *Never will I lay them all on the table, you know that it will be only one book, afterward I pass on to other things, after the fire if you accept, if you come back.*
> (Derrida, *The Post Card*, trans. Alan Bass, 1987: 225)

> *In consequence of the financial straits of the republic, it became necessary to dispose of the library of the Medici, which had become the property of the state [...] There was great danger that this magnificent collection of books would now be dispersed. Such a loss would have been irreparable; there was at that time no library in Europe which contained so complete a collection of Greek and Latin classics. It happened that the convent of St Marks could then command a considerable sum of money, in consequence of the sale of all unnecessary property which Savonarola had recommended. They agreed to pay two thousand florins at once...*
> (William Robinson Clark, *Savonarola: His Life and Times*, 1890: 269)

In a picture book you once gave me: a sixteenth century Florentine painting
of the execution of Girolamo Savonarola in the Piazza della Signoria. The
fire in long-shot, the austere piazza like a lord's great kitchen.

I seldom dream of him but when I do we are always dancing,
it is always a waltz, the old-fashioned kind
it is always light, filtered sunlight and gardenias, and blond wooden floors
(there is always a part of this that is for you).

A vague and silent music stops.
And it's clear you've
had your heart bro-
-ken like a record

> *All things I built are falling, ruined all/ I saw them fall as dust upon the sea!*
> (William Dawson, *Savonarola: A Drama*, 1900: 89)

The small boy asks me to explain: what is happening in this picture?
These people have a fire. See, they are bringing wood.
Why? I suppose they like fires. I bowdlerize,

for knowledge should come later, long after this rough magic and those injured things, jointed of their bones, fahrenheit; the smoke from Alexandria still lingering in our hair. He is distracted by horses in the foreground, does not see

the three figures hanging there

in the polity of the piazza. How many similar journeys in the previous year with armloads of writing, books he had consigned to loss, the "poetry in Latin and in the vernacular, and other heretical things" —

& some say the painter of the Primavera was inspired to carry his own work to be burnt amongst the rest. Though this is uncertain. A reckless severance from memory, the heat in his arteries flickering against the tunica intima.

There is no longer a book for this. I miss you.
I don't even dream about you anymore; that is how far it has gone.

> *Last night we were in the library, the last of the afternoon*
> *sun, reading Proust aloud he was stroking my hair. Do*
> *you see what you have done to me? Bereft.*

If I were to put my hand out now, and touch your cheek. That night in 1497, before we lost who we are.

bro-ken like a record
-like a record
-like a record

And these people, asks the boy, what are they doing?
Oh, they are just walking slowly towards the pleasant warmth of the flames...

Jack Ross

Library Dreaming

Wallace Stevens Meets the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang

Let be be finale of seem
– 'The Emperor of Ice-Cream'

Who's to say it couldn't have happened?
the young Wallace Stevens
born in 1879
in Reading, Pennsylvania
might well have travelled out west
sometime before going to Harvard
in the Fall of '97

It wasn't till 1896
on his release
from Wyoming State Prison
that Butch Cassidy
put together the Wild Bunch
(Stevens was 17)

It wasn't till 1901
that he and Etta Place and the Sundance Kid
left for South America
(Stevens was 22)

It wasn't till 1908
he was shot down
in San Vicente Bolivia
(Stevens was 29)

It wasn't till 1916
that he moved to Hartford
becoming Vice President
of the Hartford Accident & Indemnity Company
in 1934

NOTE: When you start to cull your National Library collection along predetermined lines -- in this case, an increasingly narrow definition of what is 'of local interest' — you inhibit the ability to make unexpected connections. A nation as small as ours, in so illimitable an ocean, cannot afford to cut off its possibilities in so short-sighted a way. Wallace Stevens may be trusted to stay on our shelves, but even land-locked Bolivia may be part of our story -- or we part of theirs. J.R.

Lobgesang

Büchern bin ich zugeschworen,
Bücher bilden meine Welt.
Bin an Bücher ganz verloren,
Bin von Büchern rings umstellt.

Zärter noch als Mädchenwangen
Streichl ich ein geliebtes Buch,
Atme bebend vor Verlangen
Echten Pergamentgeruch.

Inkunabeln, Erstausgaben,
Sonder-, Luxus-, Einzeldruck:
Alles, alles möcht ich haben -
Nicht zum Lesen, bloss zum Guck!

Bücher sprechen ungelesen -
Seit ich gut mit Büchern stand
Weiss ich ihr geheimstes Wesen:
Welch ein Band knüpft manchen Band!

Bücher, Bücher, Bücher, Bücher
Meines Lebens Brot und Wein!
Hüllt einst nicht in Leichentücher -
Schlagt mich in van Geldern ein!

München, 1932

Song of Praise

To books I am sworn totally,
Books constitute my world.
I am utterly lost to books,
I am encircled by books.

More tenderly even than girls' cheeks
I caress a beloved book,
I inhale, trembling with desire
The scent of genuine parchment.

Incunables and first editions,
Special-, luxury-, single-print:
All, all that, I want to own –
Less to read them, than admire!

Books speak to me before their reading–
Since I have had close bonds with books
I know of their most secret ways:
Such alliances there are among them!

Books and books and books galore
The bread and wine of my life!
At my death give me no shroud,
Wrap me up in van Gelder paper.

Munich 1932
tr. by. Friedrich Voit

—Wolfskehl was a great bibliophile. He had to sell his famous book collection when he escaped to New Zealand in 1938, where he died in 1948. Over several years the German Literary Archive in Marbach has reconstructed Wolfskehl's library, both by acquiring volumes as they came on the market again and with digitized copies, including the small collection he managed to assemble as an exile here in New Zealand. This reconstruction now provides unique and important historical and cultural documentation, illuminating some of the 'secret ways' of books as they stretch over centuries and cultural spheres. F.V.

Jeffrey Paparoa Holman

Book Group

Mac doesn't say much today,
his silence is a kind of speech.
Jeremy is thinking aloud, not
even words can pass his lips.
Anaru makes the most of
time he's doing, doing him.
Stevie's ghosted to a wing
out there, but here he is.
The books we share today
are only half the tale; each
soul around this table's a body
never meant to be this shape.
It's what we do, it kills the time.
It's where we dream of endings,
waking up in a different story.

Roger Hickin

Clothbound

my copy of Rilke's *Journal*
of Malte Laurids Brigge
belonged to the late
Phoebe Meikle

who bought it
at Zwemmer's
Charing Cross Road
London in 1950

a book of horrors
in a torn jacket
as new between its boards
of cornflower blue

Scott Flanagan

21st Century Allegory of Hope

Feeding words in to a Black Hole while
I stand in the garden, outside this house
on the single hill that is Port Chalmers.

It is only a small Black Hole, domestic
in scale to some of its kind, the size of
a cat or large hedgehog maybe.

I smile as my arm lengthens, pulls
away from my body towards the
singularity, and at just the precise

moment I release the word from my
fingers—I pull away my arm from
that ferocious, voracious gravity—

and the word, though static, stretches
and stretches, interminably stretches
and then disappears.

R.A.K. Mason

A Hundred Thousand Blessings

May a hundred thousand blessings fall upon your house, O China,
May they fall like the small drops that spatter the dust,
When, after long drought, the land lies warm and waiting.
May they alight on your rooftops like the quiet doves of peace,
Gliding down through the air as softly as the autumn poplar leaves,
And may these blessings be all around you in all your paths,
You and your children forever.

Epigram on a Certain Newspaper

Winds roar, seas rage, skies fall ... nothing dismays me
so long as the New Zealand Herald does not praise me.

David Geary

THE DEAL

THORNDON STREETCORNER. FOG. DIM LIGHT. A SHADY CHARACTER IN A DARK TRENCHCOAT APPROACHES A NON-DESCRIPT CIVIL SERVANT AS HE WAITS TO CROSS AT THE LIGHTS.

SHADY Hey, brother, got a light?
CIVIL I don't smoke. And...and neither should you.
SHADY True, true, keep trying to kick'em but they got a grip on me. But, hey, you looking for something...else? Something to get lit?
CIVIL I'm fine.
SHADY I'm selling. I got everything. I got...books.
CIVIL Books?
SHADY Books that'll rip your head off. From all over the globe. From way back when. I may not look it, but I am...carrying...a library.
CIVIL Look, I'm –
SHADY "Love hits you from behind while you're waiting for the lights to change".
CIVIL Are you threatening me?
SHADY No, it's from one of the books. I got poetry, philosophy, geography, his –
CIVIL Where did you...get...books?
SHADY Secret...but I'll tell you - Rotary. Rotarians are barbarians. They were giving them away like a lolly scrabble from a fire engine. Picked 'em up for song. And these books sing songs that'll --
CIVIL Where are they?
SHADY Inside my coat. On a flashdrive... Yeah, nah, jokes, digital is dead, I got a truck --
CIVIL You know I work for the government. I could –
SHADY You could do the right thing and take these books back? Give them a home?
CIVIL ...Show me.

SHADY SMILES, SHUFFLES OFF. CIVIL FOLLOWS, PULLS A KNIFE.

SHADY Whoa! Thought we were getting friendly?
CIVIL Can't trust anyone these days. Nah, relax, it's just a paper knife...

okay, it's not a paper knife. Where are the books?
SHADY Not showing you now. Deal is off.
CIVIL What deal? No money has been --
SHADY Don't want money. Want you to take these good books back or I'm going to tell everyone where I got 'em and—
CIVIL But—like you said, the Rotarians were —
SHADY Nah, they're just the front, the fall guys, while the real crims deep six the rest in the harbour - using books as ballast, so your leaky boat might float a little higher.
CIVIL What real crims?
SHADY Your boss.
CIVIL What boss?
SHADY You work for the government. Who's your boss?
CIVIL ... Show me the books.
SHADY You do PR for Internal Affairs, right? You find fifty words for "No", massage the truth, clean up messes, make memos disappear, and some unlucky folks, too.
CIVIL ...Who are you?
SHADY An avid reader, a concerned citizen. Listen, I got dirt that links your boss to illegal book biffing, and that the order came from the top, from —
CIVIL Show me the books!
SHADY They aren't here. (FRUSTRATED, CIVIL WALKS AWAY). But I do have a memo, signed by your boss. And I'm meeting Nicky Hagar here, to pass it on if you --
CIVIL Who leaked it?
SHADY You did. You got hacked. Damn that digital revolution! You know if you turn the Beehive upside down, it kind of looks like a sieve.

CIVIL RUNS AT SHADY, HIS KNIFE DRAWN. SHADY SIDESTEPS AND A DELUGE OF BOOKS FALL FROM THE SKY, BURYING CIVIL. SHADY GIVES THUMBS UP TO A TRUCK DRIVER PARKED ON AN OVERPASS ABOVE WITH A TIPPED UP DECK. SHADY TAKES OUT HIS MOBILE.

SHADY Nicky, we still on?...Good. Bring your camera. I got picture for ya.

END

Graham Reid

Back to the Islands

When I was a wee boy, on Sunday mornings I'd climb into bed with my dad and he would tell me a story. It was always much the same story and, with me nudging him awake from time to time, he would spin a tale of a little boy named Robinson who ran away to sea.

I was always that boy in my imaginings, and indeed when I was about seven I did try to run away to sea.

The romance of Robinson, his travels to strange lands, the storms and the shipwreck grew inside me until one day I learned where this had all come from.

I got a child's version of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

I treasured that book and over time gravitated to literature about islands, passing through *Treasure Island* along the way and of course ending up back where I started with Defoe's actual *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York*, first published in 1719.

It was tough going but as a teenager I devoured it, and then when at university studying English Literature I encountered it again in a more adult and academic way. New layers were revealed, here was the "economic man" who scorned the money he found on the shipwrecked vessel . . . but took it anyway.

Then there was the problematic relationship with Friday, all the religious and political subtexts . . .

What that book did was take me on an adventure into literature and the context in which it is created. It also took me to the famous Llandoger Trow pub in Bristol where Defoe supposedly met the real castaway Alexander Selkirk and heard his story.

Defoe, whose life to that point had been one of being pursued by bailiffs and political enemies for his pamphleteering, doubtless loved the idea of isolation from society.

Graham Reid

Robinson Crusoe got me into reading about Defoe's life and times, his *Journal of the Plague Year* and more.

And to Michel Tournier's *Friday, or, The Other Island* which is a rather more clear-eyed retelling of the castaway tale.

I still read "island literature" and even settle in for movie spin-offs like Tom Hanks' *Cast Away.*

Yes, it is escapism in a sense. But it is an escape into something rather than from the world.

It is storytelling, childhood memories and voyages of digressive discovery through the power of pages and print.

What more could anyone ask from a story or a book than it introduce us to other stories and offer us a lifetime of rewarding reading?

David Howard

LET THERE BE

As our library increased in size and prestige there was less opportunity for those who kept to themselves, rarely venturing from the basement stacks. After all, stars are stars because they are seen. We couldn't hold a candle to them.

The word came from above, it always does. Perhaps noon reduces shadows so much that *grow* and *go* look the same to the brightest?

They sent us into the world, where one good book among many claimed there was endless space made by the best words ever.

On the last day of the financial year a *New York Times* bestseller visited our apple box: 'I love what you've done with the space,' it said recto turning green and verso yellow, 'where do you go for repairs?'

'We lie open to the sky,' I replied, 'some nights we become illuminated manuscripts.'

Richard Taylor

Barbarism Against the Book

We have to indeed have the idea that we are many. 'We are many you are few,' Shelley writes in a poem about the Peterloo Massacre, 'The Mask of Anarchy'. Still, he cared.

> Fact: a lot of those who were sent to Australian
> prisons were in reading clubs, some were radicals.

I thought that indeed, as a side aspect, someone might be making money selling off books also. Mostly libraries don't.

Young librarians and others are drawn into what is called

"technology".

It becomes an obsession. You start, as I did as a lineman then as an engineering tech working on microwave systems and radio etc ... I became so fascinated by the systems and the electronics or the radio aspects I disconnected from the political or other significance of what I was involved in. But there is big money in technology associated with cell phones. It's where the big money is and there are private companies who, I suspect, sell systems and push people away from

"old things".

Is this what is happening with the library?

What Capitalism is doing is selling gadgets. Capitalism is in now a stage that Mao tse Tung and others predicted would occur. It has massively overproduced. Now we have the illusion of "Progress", an abstraction no one can define. We are really at sea.

Marxism was too hopeful and failed to factor in that we need to allow people equality but also allow people to keep their religions and other things. Change must be purposeful and for and by people, not driven by the enormous companies who now drive our systems, nor driven by people with fixed ideas. Somehow, as Auden said, we need to

and stop our obsession with money and “Progress”.

Image: a young woman pushing buttons while walking along a sea shore or passing a beautiful tree as a flight of birds passes over.

We also need humans and good persons to see the beauty of books and what was written in them.

Remember: electronic devices are fallible and likely to fail at any time as with the Hamilton hospital cyber event.

Electronic systems and physical books are not mutually exclusive, but we need to think in terms of the inherent beauty and wonder of the human mind, and not “Progress” and “efficiency”.

We need to think of what is interesting and beautiful. Even what is

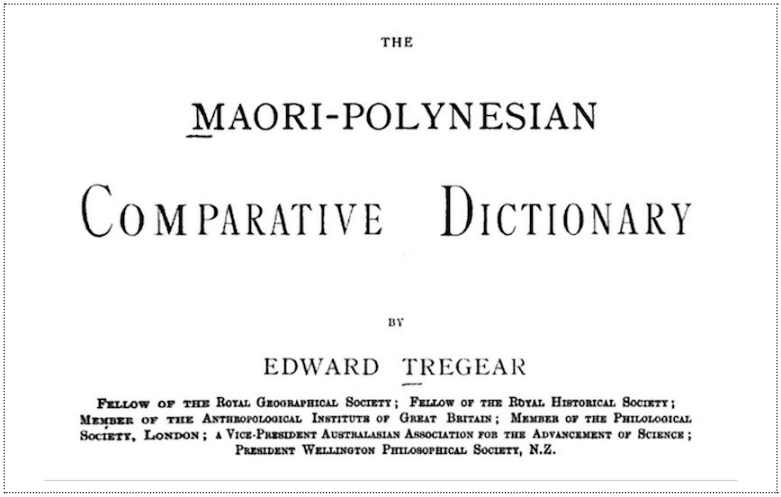
spiritually deep,

something that can be found in deep or simple poetry, and in books of all kinds.

We have to oppose these pirates of our culture whether “our culture” means European culture, Asian culture, Māori culture or whatever culture. We are a multi-world.

I protest this barbarism against The Book.

Edward Tregear (1846-1931)



THE

MAORI-POLYNESIAN

COMPARATIVE DICTIONARY

BY

EDWARD TREGEAR

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY; FELLOW OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY; MEMBER OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN; MEMBER OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY, LONDON; A VICE-PRESIDENT AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE; PRESIDENT WELLINGTON PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, N.Z.

Michael O'Leary

Sonnet of the Book Thieves

The National Library tried to slip this one through on the quiet
Telling the Friends of the Libraries, with a certain mirth
The belief that books in the digital age are of little worth
In such a convincing manner that they would buy it

They'd 'forgotten' to check the Library books properly
Because of toxic policies towards printed matter
A large number of books, 640,000, lay in tatters
The result is to abandon them from the Library

A recent film remembers well those who destroy books
When a young woman rescued books from a Nazi bonfire
A civilization depends on its attitude to the written word

Thus, beware of thieving, conniving, bureaucratic crooks
Who leave the wealth of knowledge and wisdom in their mire
Of ignorance and greed which is both withered and absurd

The Borgesian instance

The American writing the novel
in the café in Prague imagines
she is an American writing a novel
in a café in Paris

her Catherine leans forward across
the table as her hair falls lightly
across her brow and she flicks it
away while the pulse at her throat

beats and Paul notices it
and leans across to Catherine
to say someone ought to have told
you a woman is dead

It's a novel about leaning across and
falling across
the mirrored walls of this café
in Barcelona mete out repetitions

and her Catherine longs for meetings
which can be arranged at a price –
she gets an actor to play
her character back to her

the actor leaves a plot outline
from her unconscious scrawled
in lipstick on the serviette
Catherine leans across to pick it up

—Jorge Luis Borges was Director of the National Public Library in Buenos Aires from 1955 to 1973.

Jenny Powell

Title: Dog Turns at the Top of the Drive

Dog turns at the top of the drive
while workmen and I discuss insulation.
Spine tears, I begin to write.

He leads from the left; my right takes a dive,
damage occurs from partial rotation.
Dog turns at the top of the drive.

Injured ligaments start to divide
trapped in the pull of dual direction.
Spine tears, I begin to writhe.

History notes that hypermobile
sacroiliac joints lose tight connection.
Dog turns at the top of the drive.

Shelved under 'sacred' the aging archive
is deemed irrelevant, inconsequential.
Spine tears, I begin to write.

Will you decide to keep me alive
or declare that I require cremation?
Dog turns at the top of the drive,
spine tears, I begin to writhe.

Peter Olds

I Might Go to Adelaide One Day

I love the word 'south'
South Australia
Wild South South Dunedin
South Island
'Down South'.

The South Pole
Southland

South where Scott and Oats went
& never returned,
their tiny bodies ground to glass
under millions of tons of ice and howling
gales—like sand on
St Kilda Beach.
South of the South Pole.

The back of grandma's place
where the bantams scratch for grubs.
Beyond Invercargill and Campbell Island
where shipwrecked 19th c. sealers lived
on seagulls and dressed in sealskins
for two years, till they were rescued by
the crew of a scientific ship doing
research on weather patterns & the habits
of sealice.

Lynley Edmeades

These Lists are Closed

National Library Collections Management Project

These lists will not touch base with you after a week or so.
These lists will not speak to you soon.
These lists will not look forward to hearing from you.
These lists will not wait for your reply in anticipation.
These lists will not thank you for your time.
These lists will not look forward to meeting you.
These lists will not thank you for your consideration.
These lists will not hope to work with you again soon.
These lists will not let you know if they have any questions.
These lists will not wish you a nice holiday.
These lists will not ask you to consider the environment before printing.

These lists are not up for debate.
These lists don't care about you trying to save them.
These lists are for your information only, because
these lists are closed.

Johannes Contag

DISTILLING TEXTUAL TONE: TWO AGRAMMATIC COLLAGES

U.S. CRIMINAL CODE vs. THE POETRY OF OSCAR WILDE

States
prisoners,
which
may,
discretion roads,
of clearing,
the maintaining
Attorney and
be public such
reimbursed lands, offense, Sentence the
for building and victim;
expenses. and there intentionally the
constructing is inflicted offense,
As likelihood defendant serious such
part repairing of who bodily that
any such has injury participation an offense
the other person's been that in involved
expense public escaping found result
of ways before guilty in act the
operating or—the constituted enterprise,
such works arrest an death attempts
camps financed warrant offense of reckless
the wholly can described the disregard kill
Attorney or be in victim; for
General in obtained. Section or human knowingly directs,
or of found the provisions: sections theft, depredation
repairing the guilty time of
participants of—of property,
in the destruction
offense offense. of
referred Bureau property, contraband, mutiny
of and riot,
Prisons and trespass
employees of
powers title

Meadow daffodil, missel-thrush should
too love-child frighted trodden
Rich the Persephone Sleep
autumn Spring, glade, been
time, has One wearied kind.
the lingered pale of There
season's on narcissus are
To loiters flower
trees, harebell afraid of silent he
And spreads Of lads Hylas, chimes,
see her their of columbine else,
his azure own Arcady! Its must
treasure pavilion love
scattered some hidden bee,
wandering look to Kissed instead winter lonely
enchantment leaves, For Love throbbing
held us (Green more unkissed mate is of
the leaves supreme And I kisses, the
king it upon goal. over and stay sailed linnet's
in tribe her lute Lo! songs upon throat
grows golden while allow, never Is
and sun hair. not
the Green spake
hum grasses the
Of through earth
look the did
upon. yellow turn
As sheaves away
Of Her
pomegran autumn visage,
cut corn from
twain, not God,
is Hecate's
her boat
crimson

Mary-Anne Bourke

(KLAXON)

Wake up, little children, wake up
Wake up, little children, wake up
We've all been sound asleep
Wake up, you children, and weep
The dream is over, it's nought o'clock
And we're in trouble deep
Wake up, you people
Wake up, you people

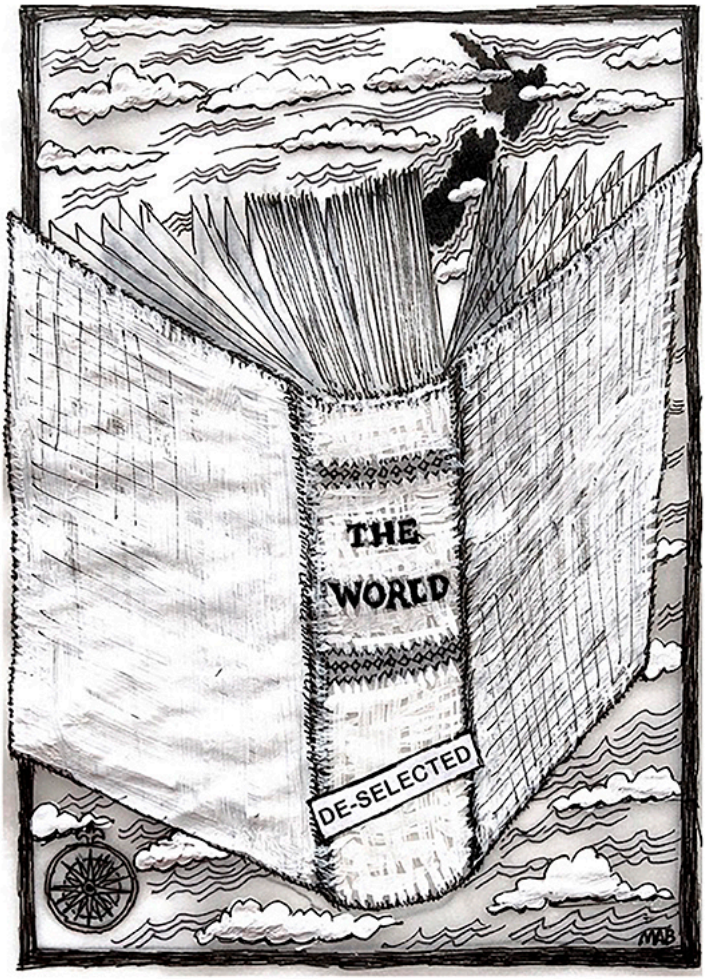
Well, what do you reckon they told Jacinda?
How the hell did they sell it to Grant?
What are we gonna tell the kids
When they say—You did what?!
Wake up, New Zealand
Wake up, New Zealand

So, they told everyone those books there were dumb
Looks like they goofed, and some
Wake up, New Zealanders
Wherever you come from
Is anyone home?

Wake up, you people, wake up
Wake up, you people, wake up
You know this move here is not hot
The DIA has lost the plot
If we're gonna be sheep, our goose is cooked
Our reputation is shot
Wake up, you people
Wake up, you people

Because who's gonna tell our story now?
Now they've de-selected the past (all that hard evidence)
What are we gonna tell the kids when they say—What were you thinking?
Wake up, little children
Wake up, little children
And weep

—*(To the tune of 'Wake Up, Little Suzie' by The Everly Brothers).*



The World Lost

Harry Ricketts

Indirect Popcorn 2

This agreeably battered and foxed copy
of *The Pill Versus the Springhill Mine Disaster*

(Jonathan Cape, 1970) was given to me
by the painter Karl Maughan. According

to the flyleaf, it had previously belonged
to Peggy Dunstan, whose capital D resembles

a distant sail suddenly filled by the wind.
Alongside is the price $14.

I'd vaguely assumed that no one read Brautigan now,
that he had disappeared into some time-warp,

where they still roll up to *Hangman's Beautiful Daughter*,
say 'trippy tray', lounge with the shine of youth.

But when I asked Karl's wife Emily, who's a novelist
and teaches creative writing, she said that some

of her students read Brautigan and particularly like
'The Revenge of the Lawn' and *Trout Fishing in America*.

Phil, an Aussie friend in Hong Kong, was a fan
of *The Hawkline Monster: A Gothic Western*,

used to read out bits while the sun,
a bloated leech, slid behind Lion Rock.

On page 75 of this battered, foxed copy
of *The Pill Versus the Springhill Mine Disaster*

is a seven-line poem called 'Indirect Popcorn'
and, underneath, written slantwise in black ink:

John,
Just a little
thing you'll
find sometime.
I hope you're
happy
Ina
with love

Kia Orana, Alistair Te Ariki Campbell,

Kia Orana, Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, I greet you from the land of the living. I bow my head in respect to you and your work. When I close my eyes I see your 'long pouring headland,' your 'smoking coast' and 'men moving between the fires.'

I wish I had known you, but then we were different generations, linked only by our sensibilities and our love of language. For me, you were a bridge from my white *palangi* culture to Polynesian ways, to your 'plant gods, tree gods, gods of the middle world...' I sank into your ocean. I believe you were the first Polynesian poet to have a collection published in English, *My Eyes Dazzle*, in 1950 when I was only three years old. You were, in yourself, something of a bridge with your Scottish father, Jock Campbell, and your Cook Island mother Teu Bosini, a descendant of the Tongarevan *ariki* or high chief Paroa. You were equally at home with Dionysus and Te aka ia Roe in whom you discovered the root of your existence. You were not afraid to walk the paths of love, or to walk the 'black path at noon/Walk the tilting earth/between dream and nightmare,' and you taught me to walk those paths too, the gentle and the savage. Too see the gods in a piece of driftwood, and to pass the drinking horn with 'water spilling over the lip' in the presence of girls in their none-too-shy mini skirts.

I met you in the street one day a year or so ago, but I doubt that you remember. I was passing the Auckland Central Library when I noticed a battered old aluminum book case stuffed with books. Giveaway books. The library was having a purge. And there I found a jewel, your novel, *The Frigate Bird*, published by Heinemann Reed (who longer exist) in 1989, with an introduction by Albert Wendt who described you as 'a kaumatue in Pacific writing.'

I could feel your presence, hovering around me, you clinging to the inside of a coconut shell, your *Avaiki*, your shadow in the impossibly long night, and I shivered.

Dead men tell no tales, they say, but that doesn't apply to writers. Writers can be the dead talking. Reading from *The Frigate Bird* then, standing on the Auckland street with people from all over wandering by, I was listening

to a dead man's tales. The blurb describes the novel as 'alternating between the comic and the sinister, fantasy and madness, Polynesian spirituality and European angst.'

But what was it doing, discarded on the street, lying sideways like a homeless person, this precious piece of heritage? Later I was told there were 'surplus copies' that needed discarding. Nowhere to house them.

I could hear your voice telling me that a culture that can't house its books can't house its people either, and that is already true. We have 'surplus people.' It was Heinrich Heine, in the early 19th Century who observed, 'Wherever they burn books, in the end will also burn human beings.' Perhaps we can reformulate Heine's observation into its prequel,

'Wherever they discard books, in the end will also discard people.'

And that is coming true too, my friend. More and more I see discarded people lying on pavements with no one to come and give them a home, as I did with your novel.

Your discarded *The Frigate Bird* sits in my book case, and is given due respect as a taonga. No longer discarded, but what about the homeless who also cluster around the library? Who is around to treat them as a *taonga*?

Recently Bill Direen contacted me, and told me how many thousands to books have been shoveled into the fires of oblivion. I daren't think of how many. Whole sections of our culture and cultural memory pealed away. Burnt or pulped. The bleak logic that drives all this would have been alien to you, I think. Cost cutting, space cutting, human cutting. I see your 'leaf-green/Bodies leaning and talking with the sea behind them...' and I think of that dusty concrete expanse with its sad old bookcase and its discarded books.

So *Aere Ra* my friend, go well in your chosen ocean. One way or another, your words will live after you. Your guardians are on hand.

Waiheke Island, June 2021

Homage to *Fahrenheit 451*

An index of the forbidden, incunabula,
completist compendium, the great codex,
gospels, epistles, illuminated missals,
Sibyl's leaves, pith taken from the trunks of trees.
Book of facts, book of feasts, book of legends,
book of nonsense, book of lies, book of dreams,
book of lost tribes, book of enlightenment,
bleeding edge of devil's ink, one more time.
Book of annihilation, defacement; book thrown,
book that bites and stings to free us from us;
book buried full fathom five, made of bone.
The Viking epic, the Hindu epic, *The Dunciad*,
even the Elizabethan world view,
dumped on the cart, books sacred or taboo;
books forgotten: asked, what happened to you?
Books extant bow down, now out on their ear,
each extinct volume stamped NOT MADE HERE.
Books judged guilty till proved innocent.
Literature blown to very fine scraps:
fragments stuck like wings of bees in amber;
books like a squarish chunk of the True Cross.
The farce of 'dustiny', backward and abysmal,
a negation that rejects the universal;
leaping from the pages into your arms no more;
instead, remaindered and trucked for landfill.
Gore Vidal's four favourite words: I told you so;
but who is to know Oscar Wilde tore off
the top of each page he read with the flourish
of an orchestra conductor, entombed
along with his books as a waka sinks on Taupō.
Laws to purify the dialect of the tribe;
remember us, whisper words of wisdom,
though passports revoked they're shipped offshore.
Cathedral where logomancers once held sway,
the gulf of which Horace wrote and Homer sang
is as empty as a bureaucrat's head;
and those are dollar signs that were her eyes.

David Eggleton

Light creates place, but print is plain meaning,
and absence is melancholy, an ode by John Keats.
God's anvil, smote by McCahon's paintbrush, was built
for Jerusalem with Blake's Holy Word.
Archaic zeal unhouses a legacy,
a bookish harvest crushed to root out heresy.
Dust is dust, and that vaulted ambition
of collections past, a quaint old custom.
Let some muscular aphorist rip shit or bust
this slow-grown forest for Amazon chopsticks.
It's the same mess made yesterday —
as the landscape erodes in today's rain —
when conserving was a dirty word in boardrooms.
Beware jabberwocks with their tape measures,
beware contempt of performative franchises,
beware the down-under of the spirit,
grim resistance of civil puritans.
So slash the library until it bleeds,
outsource consultation of our needs;
give books to the collector of left-over souls.
Urn Burial, Urquhart's 'Rabelais', all are gone.
Books are noble animals but have to be put down,
because about suffering they are never wrong.
Out of the crooked timber of humanity,
no straight thing was ever made, except books:
books, now martyrs to electronic buzzfuzz,
cancel culture and bonfires of the vanities,
airy nothings of populist politicians.
You screen, I screen, we all screen together.
I dig your screen; screen on, it's a lovely feeling;
your smartphone screen has got me reeling.
Slam the book shut and get with the programme:
a mass indoctrination by the corporation.
Put books through a paper shredder;
kill the arcane tome, you'll feel better.

'The cradle rocks above an abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness. Although the two are identical twins, man, as a rule, views the prenatal abyss with more calm than the one he is heading for (at some forty-five hundred heartbeats an hour). I know, however, of a young chronophobiac who experienced something like panic when looking for the first time at homemade movies that had been taken a few weeks before his birth. He saw a world that was practically unchanged - the same house, the same people - and then realized that he did not exist there at all and that nobody mourned his absence. He caught a glimpse of his mother waving from an upstairs window, and that unfamiliar gesture disturbed him, as if it were some mysterious farewell. But what particularly frightened him was the sight of a brand-new baby carriage standing there on the porch, with the smug, encroaching air of a coffin: even that was empty, as if, in the reverse course of events, his very bones had disintegrated.'

(*Speak, Memory*, Vladimir Nabokov)[1]

https://mariaramosmorales.medium.com/create-a-visual-novel-using-renpy-3a23fc59bbc8

[1] Sitting on my bookshelf is a hardback copy of Nabokov's *Speak, Memory*, published by Victor Gollancz in 1951. Inside the cover, inked stamps display CANCELLED and DISCHARGED (thrice), as well as the acquisition date 8 OCT 1952. A pasted leaf indicates the last occupied library catalogue was at the University of Auckland, *813.5 Nils*, scored in black fountain pen ink in a fine hand, a *hand's touch*? One notes as well a printed barcode, converted into numbers: 3555600252478. Do the bars, numbers and handwriting indicate *equivalence*, one wonders? With such consideration in mind, one approaches the nexus of memory. It turns its page, one by one. Onto a next page, which in my copy, reads: NEW ZEALAND COUNTRY LIBRARY SERVICE (AEWS), and a next, which reads, N.Z. GOVERNMENT (N.L.S.). What I have read brims with the book held in the hand, already a treasure, before I come upon the first words that Nabokov's memoir utters, 'to Véra'. I check and confirm *she* is his wife, though arrayed here in green, tight-lipped, a gift. And to touch *her* is to feel a cool resistance, as to touch the upper edge of each individual page, yellowing, musty, verily tactile. Is *she* the promise of the numinous, of an *inside* to this experience, in part always untouched? The reflection occurs: is this pulsing in the palm of the hand something to have emulated by way of that other curious misnomer *digitisation*?

✦

Sandra Sarala

Subverse Protest Time Capsule from an Offshore Zeit-Traveller

PRESENT

every Berlin winter I light my pale jade Kachelofen with books
found on the street, discarded, no longer treasured
cremated in the service of apartment heating

coal-fired, not to be made illegal till at least 2026 nor its heavily subsidised
fuel phased out till 2035
no, don't believe the German government's greenwash (nor anyone's)
their power of propaganda learned from forefathers

who also burned books they did not dote on
who in turn spawned spies creating massive binders of neighbours'
intimate movements, findings
which proved impossible to shred overnight as changing winds churned up
a fall of wall fall

instead of cover-ups
or uncoverings
I make new books with the covers

where it is tradition to destroy the past and have it haunt us
the tiled oven flames make screwed-up-ball ash ghosts of authors'
hard efforts
tearing too, red hot through stick-bones of tight-twisted multiple pages,
the fossilised lignite ignites

glowing oh so cosy, radiant through the slow-release brick and tiles
the optimum spot for snuggling up to read, not those littery lettered
skeletons, instead
today's beloved magazines, paperbacks and tomes

°

PAST

in Welly '92 our Unemployed Training Trust big class field trip was
to do Alexander Turnbull and National Library too in a journalism
students' learning clusterfuck:
two buildings, one morning

how to use their revered bookly, photographic and numerous other
whispering archive resources
how to edge wide-eyed round the Tiriti which most of us then called
—the Treaty
how to be worthy researchers for all our days ahead

returning to the National, I scoured records for the old Racing
Conference Building where I lived
its curved Victoria-Wakefield corner glass made to measure and imported
in one piece from Italy
long before the magical energy-hungry internet, going to the National is
what you did

another time, on a long-haul trip home when that was still possible
I met an old friend for a glorious summer lunch in the sheltered
plaza adjacent
thinking for sure I'd be able to come back again

°

FUTURE

it may seem nothing to do with the future now but when making to leave
in the past I ditched stuff,
talismans of personal history – books, records; talismans heavy or hard
to store or transport – for
future me had no idea what could or might be counted in time ahead
as irretrievably lost

and here I am there
etching a little reminder message into the hard monumental foresight wall
saying, you never have any idea what future yous will need or want

°

John Allison

a book in the hand ...

in October 2020 the National Library declared it would be 'rehoming' 640 000 overseas-published books

there are approximately 8 000 bricks in an average house

if books were bricks we could build eighty houses
and that would be useful

but they are not bricks, each book already is a home
not of straw nor sticks nor bricks

but a House of Words
standing on its foundations as deep as the world

and in each house a passageway
with all its doors leading through into other places

*

here comes the Big Bad Wolf who huffs and puffs
and counts the cost of housing books

who will fluster and bluster at those 640 000 houses
and might just succeed

but the words in the wind will not stop murmuring
they are birds they are autumn leaves

they are kites jigging and jagging
tugging at the limits of our hopes and possibilities

they are rising mist at dawn
still hanging about until the cows come home

they are clouds in the sky, and clouds are always
right for the conditions

they are our future's seed and spore
adrift like golden motes in that lovely evening light

they are human voices
that long after the wolf is gone will haunt us still

imagine the inhabitants of 640 000 haunted houses
as birds of passage passing through...

*

there are those who might think a book is passé
that the tablets of the lore

will now suffice
but a book converses tenderly with our fingers

seeps through our skin
its pages and our minds entangled like mycelia

amongst the eloquent root-tips of language

to hold a book firmly in your hands is not at all
like holding a brick

you can heft a brick but a book will heave you
into another space altogether

it is not just another brick in the wall

it is the way out beyond the wall

Contributors/Notes

in order of appearance

Charles Brasch, poet and supporter of the arts, was founding editor of the *Landfall*. His library of 7,500 books in Special Collections at Otago University and his archives (28 linear metres) are housed at the Hocken Library.

Anne Kennedy, poet, fiction writer, screenplay editor and teacher, has won many awards and fellowships including the NZ Post Book Award for Poetry and the IIML Writers' Residency. *The Sea Walks into a Wall* will appear later this year.

Harry Ricketts teaches English Literature and creative writing at Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka. He has published over 30 books. *Selected Poems*, Victoria University Press, 2021. Poems are from *Winter Eyes* (VUP, 2018) and *Newsroom* (2019).

Dolores Janiewski is Associate Professor in history focussing on the Cold War. *Private Security and the Modern State: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Routledge, 2020). Parts of An Induced Amnesia have appeared in Victoria University's 'Ideas Room'.

Fiona Kidman writes novels, memoir and poetry. Her latest novel, *This Mortal Boy*, won the Acorn Fiction Prize in 2018. She has been awarded a DNZM, OBE and the French Legion of Honour. This poem is from *Where your left hand rests* (Godwit, 2010)—with thanks.

Cilla McQueen, poet and artist, lives in Motupōhue, Bluff. She was the 2009-2011 NZ Poet Laureate and received the Prime Minister's Award for her Poetry. *Poeta, new and selected poems* (OUP, 2018) (OUP), and *Qualia* (Maungatua Press, 2020).

C.K. Stead is perhaps New Zealand's most respected writer and literary figure. He lives in Auckland. NOTE: Anthony Thwaite (1930-2021) was an English poet, critic and editor of Philip Larkin's letters and poems. Ann Thwaite (b. 1932) is known for her insightful biographies. She lived in New Zealand in the early 1940s.

Lisa Samuels works with experimental writing, multi-modal art, and relational theory. Her most recent book is the prose poem The Long White Cloud of Unknowing (2019); a new poetry book, Breach, is forthcoming in 2021. She lives in Tāmaki Makaurau.

David Herkt won the Wesley Wright Poetry Prize for *The Body of Man*. *High Times: The New Zealand Drug Experience 1960–2000* was awarded a New Zealand Film & Television Award. He asserts, his writing depends on well-curated and well-conserved libraries.

Thomas Hocken (1836-1910) wrote of Tasman's journal referring to translations by his wife, Bessie. He read his paper before the Otago Institute in 1895. He bequeathed an extensive library of papers, documents and books to the people of New Zealand.

Mark Pirie is editor and archivist for PANZA (Poetry Archive of NZ Aotearoa). In 2016, *Rock & Roll* (selected poems) was published by Bareknuckle Books. He has also written biography art books and currently edits *Broadsheet*. Website: www.markpirie.com.

David Kārena-Holmes has been published widely. *Te Reo Māori – the Basics Explained* on

Māori grammar (Oratia Press, 2020). He contributes a fortnightly column on the grammar of te reo Māori, and articles on various other topics, to the "The Nelson Mail".

Lyall Benjamin is a former bookseller and teacher. He and the editor met up by chance in his bookshop in Canberra, after many years pursuing different paths.

Michael Morrissey has published 24 books, 23 poetry collections and his stories are often anthologised. His latest poem will appear in *This Twilight Menagerie*, with cover design by Sophie Proctor.

Christine Dann writes regularly about organic gardening and eating vegetarian. She is a founding member of Book Guardians Aotearoa and has a Ph.D. in Environmental Policy from Lincoln University.

Alan Brunton couldn't give his permission but I know he would have. Alan travelled in Asia and Europe. He helped reshape NZ approaches to theatre and poetry. (1946-2002).

Carolyn McCurdie is a Dunedin writer of poetry and fiction including a children's fantasy novel *The Unquiet* (Longacre Press, 2006), a short story collection *Albatross* (Rosa Mira Books 2014), and a poetry collection, *Bones in the Octagon* (Mākaro Press, 2015).

Brian Turner's works include 12 volumes of poetry. In 2020 he was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to literature and poetry. He lives in Central Otago.

Stephanie Christie (who was Will Christie) creates poetry in the form of page poems, text art, installations, theatre, video and sound works. (Re)current interests are discourse analysis and making up songs.

Tony Beyer is the author of *Anchor Stone* (2017) and *Friday Prayers* (2019), both from Cold Hub Press. Recent work has appeared in magazines as various as *Catalyst*, *Hamilton Stone Review* and *Molly Bloom*. He lives in Taranaki, New Zealand.

Siobhan Harvey has publised eight books of poetry and creative nonfiction (*Ghosts* OUP, 2021). She has won several fellowships and prizes, and been honoured overseas with various awards. She is a lecturer in Creative Writing.

Writer, radio producer and broadcaster Simon Sweetman released his debut book of poems, *The Death of Music Journalism* in 2020. He writes the subscription newsletter "Sounds Good!" on Substack. You can find all his other stuff at *www.offthetracks.co.nz*

Bill Direen is a poet-musician. He edited the trans-cultural literary and arts magazine *Percutio* from 2006 to 2017. He edited this Reader.

Richard von Sturmer's recent books are the memoir, *This Explains Everything* (Atuanui Press, 2016), and *Postcard Stories* (Titus Books, 2019). In 2020 he was the University of Waikato's writer-in-residence. *https://thefloralclocks.bandcamp.com/*

Richard Reeve's poetry has been published by Otago and Auckland University Presses. *Horse and Sheep* (Maungatua Press, 2019). NOTES: Bill Pearson: DKH: David Kârena-Holmes.

Alfred Domett, parliamentarian-poet and premier of New Zealand (1862-63), was one of the "fathers" of the General Assembly Library. The other was Herbert Leslie James.

Peter Simpson (born Takaka, 1942) has written or edited many books on New Zealand literature, art and cultural history. He ran the Holloway Press (1993-2013). He received the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in 2017.

Olivia Macassey is a poet and editor. Her work has appeared in *Poetry New Zealand*, *Landfall*, *Takahē*, *Rabbit*, *Otoliths* and other places. She is the author of two books, *The Burnt Hotel* (2015) and *Love in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (2005).

Jack Ross writes poetry, novels, novellas and short stories. He teaches Creative Writing at Massey University and blogs at http://mairangibay.blogspot.com/. His latest poetry collection is *The Oceanic Feeling* (Salt & Greyboy Press, 2021).

Before retiring, Friedrich Voit taught German literature and language at Auckland University. He has published monographs on Karl Wolfskehl and edited his work in Germany and New Zealand (Cold Hub Press). For details about Karl Wolfskehl, see p35.

Jeffrey Paparoa Holman (1947-) writes poetry, history and memoir. He lives in Ōtautahi/ Christchurch. His poem first appeared in an essay for *Poetry New Zealand Yearbook* 2021, 'That's the Revolution: Our Prisons, ourselves'.

Roger Hickin's Cold Hub Press publishes poetry & bilingual editions. His own works include *Waiting for the Transport* (2009) and *The situation & Other Poems* (2009). He has translated works by Rogelio Guedea (2014) and Ernesto Cardenal (2014).

Scott Flanagan, an exile from his home town of Christchurch, lives in Port Chalmers. He is a visual artist who has exhibited widely in New Zealand. Language plays a significant role in his visual creations.

R.A.K. Mason (1905-71) was "New Zealand's first wholly original, unmistakablly gifted poet" (Allen Curnow). Poems are from *Uncollected Poems* (Cold Hub Press) from the Hocken LIbrary's Mason archives, Dunedin. Used with permission of Kat Zolita Mason.

David Geary writes plays, fiction, TV, film and poetry. He lives in Vancouver and teaches in the Indigenous Film, Documentary and Playwriting programs at Capilano University. His latest short fiction appears in *Pūrākau: Māori Myths Retold by Māori Writers*.

Freelance writer Graham Reid is a former journalist who has written two award-winning travel books. He lectures at Auckland University School of Music and has a music column in the *Listener*. He hosts his own music, arts and travel website *www.elsewhere.co.nz*

David Howard was Robert Burns Fellow at Otago University (2013). He held a UNESCO Residency (Prague) and the Ursula Bethell Residency (Canterbury University) in 2016. *Rāwaho: the Completed Poems* (Cold Hub Press, 2021). *www.davidhowardpoet.com.*

Richard Taylor, of Auckland, has published in various mags. Poetry Books include *RED*, and *Conversation with a Stone* (Titus Books). He asserts: books, ideas and libraries matter!

Edward Tregear (1846-1931) compiled *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (1891). He made use of international research in the General Assembly Library, which became the National Library in 1965. His poems are in many anthologies of New Zealand poetry.

Michael O'Leary writes non-fiction, fiction & poetry. He often performs his works with musicians. His latest novel is *Apocrypha Scripta* (2020). He has a degrees from Otago & Victoria universities on literary subjects. *http//:www.olearymichael.wordpress.com*

Murray Edmond, b. Kirikiriroa 1949 has published poetry, novellas and critical writing. He is a dramaturg and edits Ka Mate Ka Ora *http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/kmko/*. A history of revolt in Auckland in the 1960s will appear with Atuanui Press, in 2021.

Jenny Powell has written many individual and two collaborative collections of poems. She has presented multi-media collaborative performance pieces. Her latest collection of poems, *Meeting Rita* (2021) was published by Cold Hub Press.

Peter Olds was Robert Burns Fellow in 1978 and received the Janet Frame Literary Award in 2005. He has published dozens of chapbooks of poetry. *You fit the description the selected poems of Peter Olds* (2014, Cold Hub Press).

Lynley Edmeades is a researcher and poet, author of *As the Verb Tenses* (2016) and *Listening In* (2019). She is current editor of *Landfall*.

Johannes Contag is retranslating Kleist's stories. He also writes orchestral scores for silent films and teaches stage production at Massey University. Sources: U.S. Code, Title 18—Crimes and Criminal Procedure. Wilde: *Poems* (1881).

Mary-Anne Bourke (MAB) is a Wellington-based writer & artist.

Mike Johnson is a writer 24 books to date, of fiction and poetry. NOTE: Alistair Te Ariki Campbell (1925–2009) was a New Zealand poet, playwright, and novelist. His father was a New Zealand Scot and his mother was a Cook Island Māori from Penrhyn Island.

David Eggleton won the 2016 Ockham Book Award for *The Conch Trumpet*. He received Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in 2016. He is Poet Laureate 2019-2022. *The Wilder Years: Selected Poems*, Otago University Press (2021).

Sandra Sarala is a New Zealander in exile in Berlin, where she is theatre editor for the listings magazine Ex-Berlin.

John Geraets resides in Whangarei. *Everything's Something in Place*, poetry and criticism appeared in NZ in 2019 (Titus Books). He has also been published internationally.

Cold Hub recently published John Allison's *A Place to Return To* (2019) and *Near Distance* (2020). He is currently preparing his Collected Poems, for publication in 2022.

Sandra Bianciardi (rear cover and BGA poster painting) is a graduate of ENZBA (Paris). She has exhibited three times in New Zealand since 2001. She lives in Dunedin.